

National network for Human Rights defenders mooted



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Nava Thakuria 19 November 2011 10185 views

Various speakers at a consultation meeting on human rights in New Delhi emphasizes for a stronger and affective national network to pursue the movement for defending legal human rights. Reposing faith on the judiciary of India, most of the speakers argue that a systematic attack has been perpetuated by the authority and the situation is turning bad to worst. They have also insisted that National Human Rights Commission (of India) should be empowered to take timely actions to upheld the rights of the citizens of the country. Some speakers also advocated for enlightening the Press Council of India to properly monitor the activities of a section of newspapers that manufacture news with distorted facts.

Addressing the consultation meeting, which was organized by the Human Rights Law Network and the World Sikh Organization in collaboration with various other organizations at India Islamic Cultural Centre, Lodi Road on November 19 and 20, 2011, Dr Binayak Sen expressed concern that human rights situation in India is deteriorating in the recent past. Dr Sen, who was jailed for many months following accusation of being an anti-national, admits that Indian judiciary system has delivered amidst high expectations. The veteran social activist pointed out that a tendency has been grown by the authority and governments in India to term the human right activists as anti-national. So many of them are arbitrarily subjected to threat, harassment, jailing and even killing, Dr Sen added. Delivering the key-note address Paramjeet Kaur, widow of advocate Jaswant Singh Khalra-a victim of Punjab police extra-judicial killing- argued that the movement of Punjab was projected in a biased manner by the government. Later it was added with a religious twist. The movement in early Ninety in Punjab has snatched away the live of at least 25,000 youths. The government initially tried to hide the information but advocate Khalra disclosed the facts to the media. Ms Kaur also mentioned the name of KPS Gil, former Punjab police chief, who masterminded the extra judicial killings. She expressed shock that Mr Gill was later awarded by the government.

“Human rights activists have come under repeated attacks recently. Right to Information activists have been killed and many have had cases filed against them. Journalists have been jailed in criminal defamation cases, have been attacked, some of them killed, and media houses have had their offices ransacked. Tribal activists particularly in conflict areas have been hounded by the police and many of them are in jail today. The situation has never been so dire. The need of the hour is to protect and defend human rights activists in India today,” said Colin Gonsalves of HRLN, which is a collective of lawyers and social activists dedicated to the use of the legal system to advance human rights in India and the sub-continent. Others who spoke in the meeting include Kavita Srivastav, Henry Tiphagne, Iftikhar Gilani, Teesta Setalvad, Harish Dhawan, Mukul Sinha, Suhas Chakma, Shoma Choudhury, Advocate Phoolka, RS Bains, Navkiran Singh, Arshad Andrabi, GN Shaheen etc.

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BY NAVA THAKURIA

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